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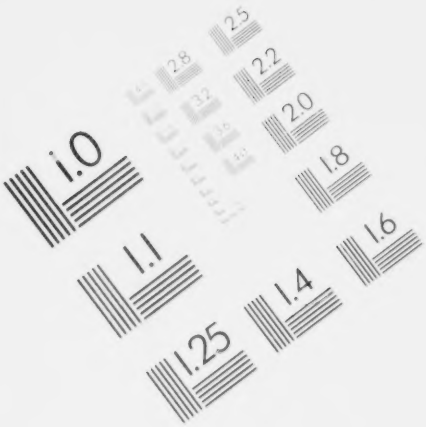

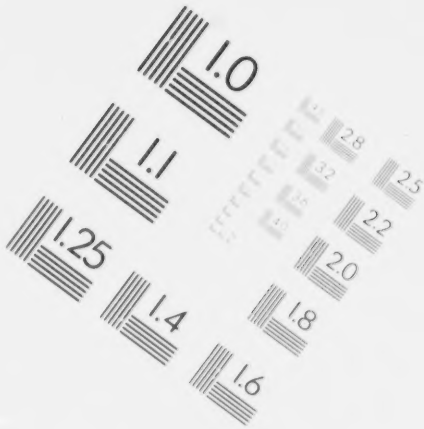

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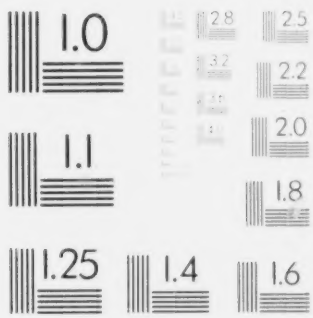

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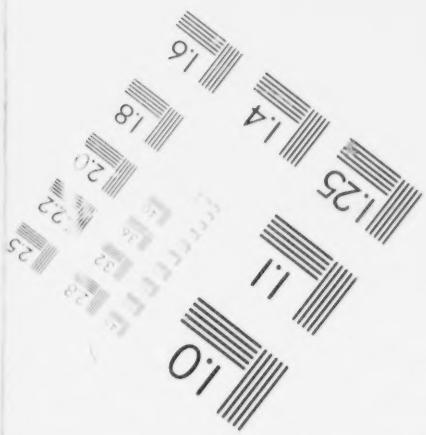

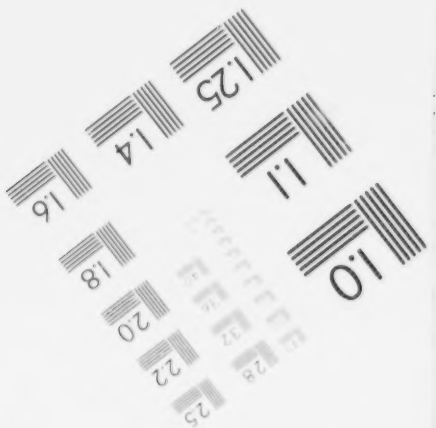

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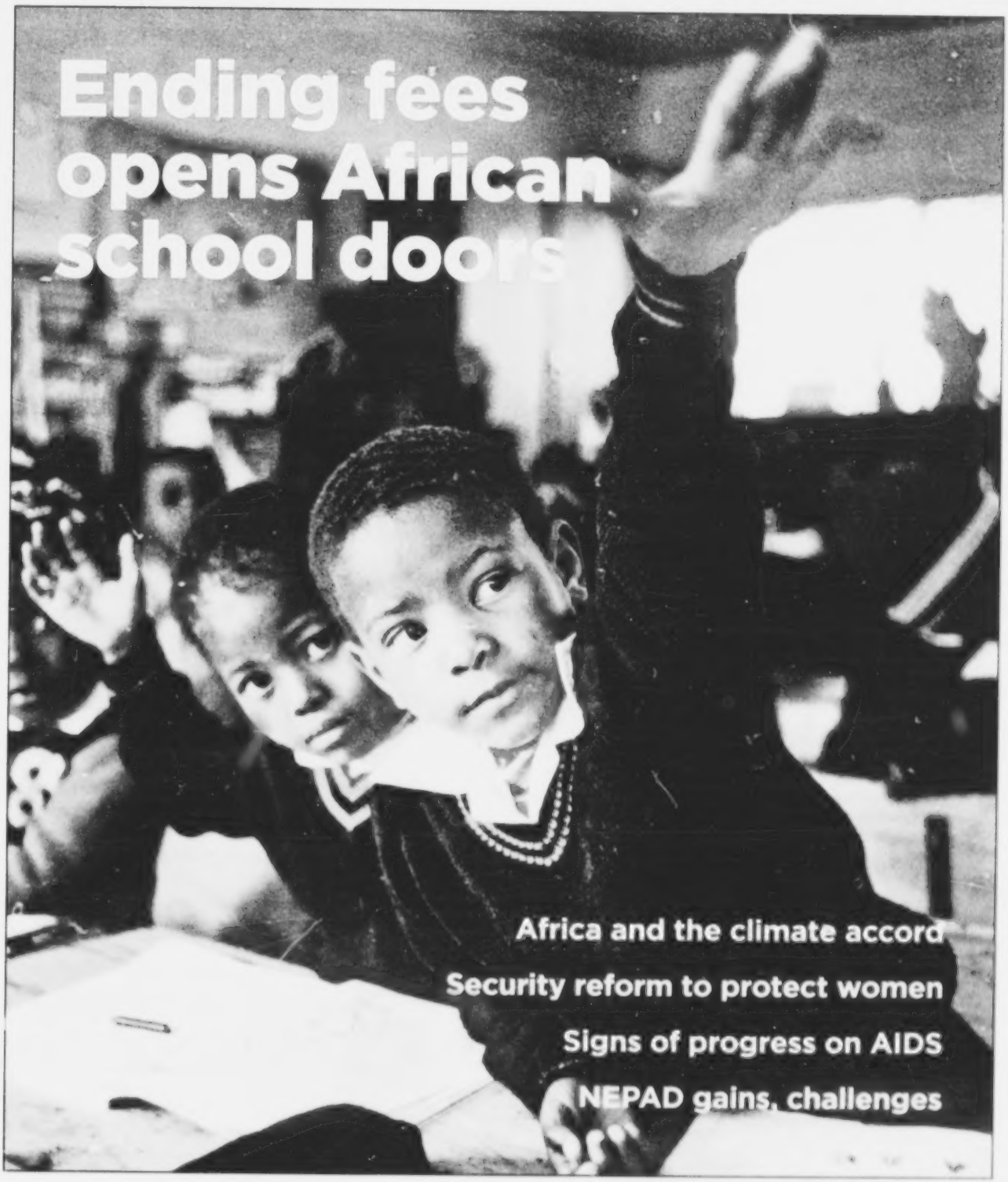

Ending fees opens African school doors

Africa and the climate accord

Security reform to protect women

Signs of progress on AIDS

NEPAD gains, challenges

AFRICA RENEWAL

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Climate deal: hard work lies ahead

Africans press strong case at Copenhagen talks

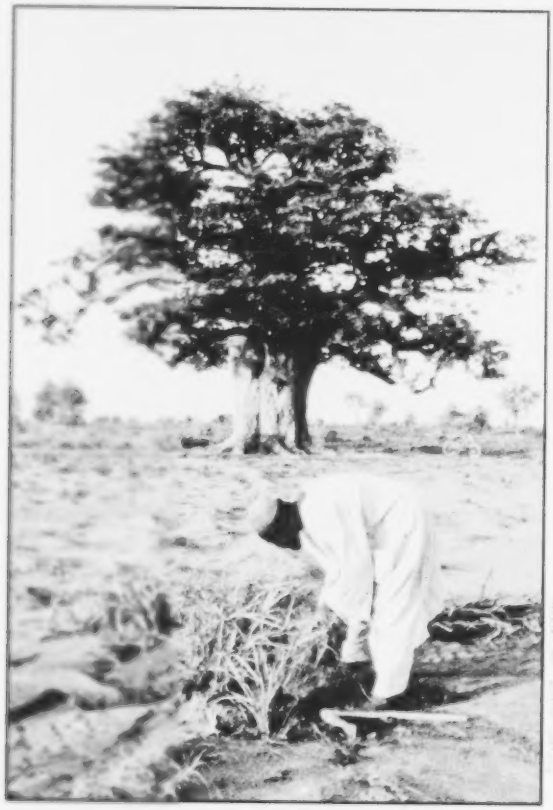
By **Ernest Harsch**

It was not the agreement that anyone had wanted. But during the night of 18–19 December — as nearly two weeks of contentious talks tottered on the brink of collapse — a limited deal was finally brokered among a couple dozen leaders, out of the nearly 120 governments that sent delegations to the United Nations climate change conference.

Reflecting the often chaotic and messy negotiating process, when the text was presented to the rest of the presidents, ministers and other delegates, a few developing countries rejected the three-page Copenhagen Accord, named after the Danish capital that hosted the conference. That opposition prevented the conference as a whole from reaching the consensus needed for outright approval, so instead it officially agreed to "take note" of the agreement. But the major industrialized powers, as well as China, Africa, the least developed countries and numerous others, supported it, some grudgingly and many with reservations.

"We wanted a complete, legally binding agreement," said South African President Jacob Zuma, expressing the views of many delegates, "but accept the progress that has been made." UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged that "the Copenhagen Accord may not be everything that everyone hoped for." However, he emphasized, "it is a beginning — an essential beginning."

For Africa specifically, the agreement was significant in two respects. First, for the actual elements of the accord. And second, for Africa's strong presence throughout the talks. Africa often finds itself on the margins of such international negotiations and usually is excluded from backroom bargaining. But in this case several African leaders, most notably President Zuma and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, actively helped hammer out the final terms.



A farmer in Burkina Faso, one of many countries in Africa suffering from more severe water shortages and other effects of climate change.

Limiting greenhouse emissions

Months before the Copenhagen meeting, many governments and environmental activists had aimed for a new international agreement to succeed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. That protocol obligates participating industrialized countries to significantly reduce their emissions of the polluting "greenhouse" gases that contribute to global warming. Since the US is not part of the Kyoto Protocol, and China and other "emerging economies" that also produce large amounts of such gases were not required to reduce their emissions, many had hoped to bring them into a new and legally-binding accord, with specific targets for drastic emissions cuts.

But as the meeting approached, it became increasingly clear that there was not enough support for such an agreement. The Copenhagen Accord instead expressed a "strong political will" to combat climate change, through "deep cuts in global emissions" that would hold the increase in the average global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, compared with its pre-industrial level (it is now at about 1 degree). Industrialized and developing countries were encouraged, individually, to spell out what emissions cuts and other efforts they would make to contribute to that goal.

Besides noting the absence of precise, mandatory targets, a number of critics of the accord also questioned the 2-degree limit. Lumumba Di-Aping of Sudan, who served as coordinator of the developing countries' Group of 77, maintained that allowing global temperatures to rise even that much was tantamount to a "suicide pact." Most African representatives did not share that belief.

For their part, delegates from small island developing states pressed for a limit of 1.5 degrees, arguing that anything more would permit an alarming rise in sea levels and thereby threaten their very survival. The Copenhagen Accord acknowledges that a 2-degree limit may not be sufficient, and calls for a reassessment of the target by 2015.

Whatever the agreement's shortcomings, many delegates saw the willingness of the US, China and other countries to be part of the Copenhagen Accord as a step forward. South Africa's Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs Buyelwa Sonjica described the US participation in the negotiations as a "breakthrough." Tanzania's

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At last, signs of progress on AIDS

Policy shift in South Africa, as new infections decline across the continent

A theatre group in Mozambique educates communities about HIV/AIDS and other health issues. Prevention programmes are helping to cut down the number of new HIV infections in many African countries.

By **Michael Fleshman**

It was long years and hundreds of thousands of deaths in coming. But on 1 December, South African President Jacob Zuma stood before a cheering throng in the capital city, Pretoria, and marked World AIDS Day with a pledge "to deploy every effort, mobilize every resource and utilise every skill that our nation possesses" to turn back the advance of the disease. There comes a time in the life of all nations when the only choice is to submit to the enemy or fight, the former anti-apartheid leader told the crowd. "That time has now come in our struggle to overcome AIDS.... We shall not submit."

It was the second major speech on AIDS in as many months for Mr. Zuma. In the view of most observers it represented a final, welcome break with the controversial policies and pronouncements of his predecessor, Thabo Mbeki. Mr. Mbeki's public doubts about the cause of the disease, and his suspicions about the safety of the lifesaving anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs that target the HIV virus that causes AIDS, were thought by many to have contributed to South Africa's grim distinction as the country with the largest number of infected people in the world.

Mr. Zuma has had his own difficulties with the issue. His 2006 comments about showering after unprotected sex with a woman living with HIV to prevent infection were widely ridiculed and caused outrage among activists. But he added substance to his World AIDS Day speech with the announcement that, beginning in April 2010, the public health service would expand ARV treatment programmes to include all infants testing positive for the virus, a change expected to save thousands of newborns every year. He also announced that treatment to prevent the transmission of the virus from mother to child at birth would begin earlier, as would treatment for those with both HIV and tuberculosis, in line with new recommendations from the UN's World Health Organization.

The new commitments follow those made a few weeks earlier to cut South Africa's rate of new HIV infections in half and provide ARV treatment to at least 80 per cent of those in need. He called on all citizens to be tested for the virus and promised to lead a "massive campaign" to raise public awareness, encourage safer sex and promote other prevention practices, as well as combat the stigma and discrimination that still surround the illness. The changes in substance and tone over the seven months Mr. Zuma has been in office "mark a fundamental break from the past," Michel Sidibé, executive director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), told the crowd in Pretoria.

Standing alongside the South African leader, the senior UN official, a Malian and the first African to head the agency, said Mr. Zuma had "shattered years of official ambivalence, rallying citizens to take responsibility for learning their [HIV] status, reducing their risk and seeking treatment." In a sign of how welcome the dramatic shift in South African government policy is internationally, Mr. Sidibé declared him "the architect of ending this epidemic" and described the mood among HIV/AIDS experts and activists as one of "euphoria."

Good news at last

The changes are very good news for the 5.7 million South Africans now living with the disease, and for a continent that has already lost perhaps 20 million people to AIDS, seen hard-won development gains wiped out and now accounts for two of every three infections globally.

But the good news is not confined within South Africa's borders. According to an update released by UNAIDS in late November,* the number of new infections in all of sub-Saharan Africa has declined by 25 per cent since the mid-1990s, amidst signs that the global pandemic may have peaked in 1996.

The main cause for the drop, UNAIDS asserts, is the success of prevention and education programmes that have finally

* *AIDS Epidemic Update 2009*, available on the Web at: < http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/EpiUpdate/EpiUpdArchive/2009/default.asp>

begun to change the behaviour of people at high risk, including men who have sex with men, commercial sex workers, intravenous drug users and, particularly in Africa, young women.

In South Africa, for example, condom use during the first sexual encounter more than doubled to 64.8 per cent between 2002 and 2008. Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania, among the countries hit hardest by the disease, all reported sustained declines in new infection rates. In Zimbabwe's case the rates have been in decline for a decade, as education and prevention programmes have persuaded sexually active adults to practice safer sex and reduce the number of their partners.

Treatment to prevent HIV-positive mothers from infecting their babies at birth has also made a difference. Between 2004 and 2008, UNAIDS reports, the percentage of women receiving such treatment increased fivefold to 45 per cent, producing a sharp drop in the number of babies born with HIV. Globally, UNAIDS estimates, over 400,000 new infections were prevented in 2008 alone.

"New HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are declining in sub-Saharan Africa," Mr. Sidibe confirmed to *Africa Renewal* in a written interview. "The drop in infections is a result of the positive impact of 'combination' HIV prevention," an approach that combines public education, access to condoms and other prevention technologies. It also results from a reduction in discrimination and bias against those with HIV and those at high risk of infection, along with policies that have promoted more responsible sexual behaviour.

Treatment access saves lives

"With increased access to anti-retroviral therapy in developing countries, we are seeing a drop in AIDS-related deaths" compared to the number of people with the disease, Mr. Sidibe says. "By the end of 2008, an estimated 4 million people in low- and middle-income countries were on anti-retroviral treatment."

Although that figure represents only about 44 per cent of all Africans who need the drugs, it nevertheless reflects a remarkable increase in access to treatment. In 2003, the update notes, only 2 per cent of Africans in need had access to the medicines. ARVs are administered to patients in later stages of the illness and have become widely available in Africa only in the past few years as high costs dropped and disputes over patent rights and international trade rules were resolved (see *Africa Renewal*, April 2005).

The availability of the drugs through such programmes as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and, in the U.S, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) kept the number of deaths in Africa stable at 1.4 million in 2008. The drugs also contributed to an increase in the number of Africans able to live with the disease, which rose by 2.7 million.

Despite the progress, Mr. Sidibe cautions, infection rates in sub-Saharan Africa remain five times higher than in any other region. "The AIDS epidemic continues to evolve. Much more is needed to turn back the epidemic. Countries need to adopt a prevention approach that focuses on those most at risk of infection."

The new UNAIDS report underlines the point. Despite the drop in infections, Africa still accounts for most of the people living with the virus globally, as well as 36 of the 50 countries with HIV rates exceeding 1 per cent of the total population. All nine countries with HIV rates above 10 per cent are African, as are over 90 per cent of babies born with the disease. With new infections far exceeding the number of people able to get ARV treatment, UNAIDS notes, treatment and prevention programmes still lag behind the need.

Empowering women is key

Mr. Sidibe notes that reducing infection rates among women, who make up 60 per cent of Africans living with HIV, will be key to Africa's long-term success. "Gender inequalities, sexual abuse, violence, conflict and poverty often increase women's vulnerability to HIV. Protecting women from becoming infected with HIV and treating women living with HIV can turn back the epidemic. Stopping women from becoming infected and increasing their access to treatment also contribute to

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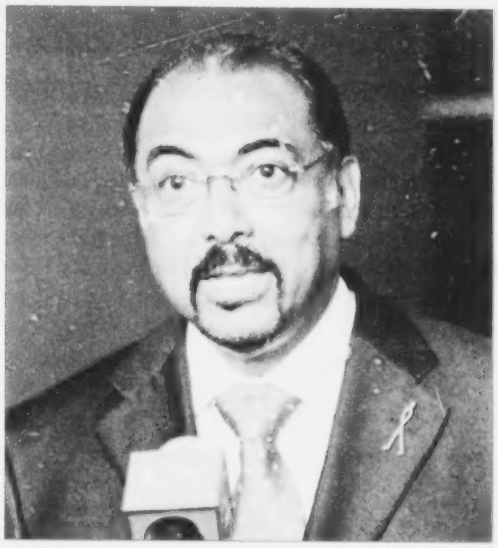


UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé: New infections and AIDS-related deaths are declining in sub-Saharan Africa, thanks to prevention efforts and the wider availability of anti-retroviral medicines.

Africa and the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, 2008

	Sub-Saharan Africa	*World*	*Africa %*
People living with HIV	22.4 mn	33.4 mn	67
Women living with HIV	13.4 mn	15.7 mn	85
Children living with HIV	1.8 mn	2.1 mn	86
AIDS-related deaths	1.4 mn	2.0 mn	70
AIDS-related child deaths	230,000	280,000	82
New HIV infections	1.9 mn	2.7 mn	70
Children newly infected	390,000	430,000	91
People receiving ARVs	2.9 mn	4 mn	73
People in need of ARVs	6.7 mn	9.5 mn	71
Average adult infection rate	5.2%	0.8%	--

Source: UN Africa Renewal from UNAIDS, Kaiser Family Foundation and US Department of Economic and Social Affairs data

New drive to save the lives of mothers, infants

Commitment, money and innovation can reduce high mortality rates

By **Stephanie Urdang**

In an otherwise grim outlook for Africa's hopes of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) there is some good news. Rwanda is very likely to meet the MDG targets for child and maternal mortality, and will possibly be one of a few countries in Africa to surpass them by the 2015 deadline. That is all the more remarkable given Rwanda's painful history of genocide, which left the economy of that small nation in tatters and its society in complete disarray.

Half of all women worldwide who die of complications from pregnancy are in sub-Saharan Africa, where 160 of every 1,000 children born also die before the age of five.

Théophile Ndabereye, a worker at the Mayange Health Centre, is pleased by some major changes at his clinic, where new equipment and more staff contribute to safe and hygienic births. "We used to only have three trained nurses and most moms were giving birth at home. We now have eighteen," Mr. Ndabereye explained, as cited in a case study by the UK's aid agency, the Department for International Development (DfID). As a result, most of the mothers in the area now give birth at the health centre. Life expectancy for the babies has improved as well. Mothers stay for three days after delivery. "Even if mothers are in a hurry to go back to their home after they give birth, we show and explain to them why it is very important that they stay with us for three days," he said. "And they understand and they stay, for the sake of their new babies."

The women and their families in Mayange can trace many of these changes to the government's health insurance programme, Mutuelles de santé, which is run by community representatives and local health providers. Access to the programme increased from 7 per cent to 85 per cent of the population between 2002 and 2008. Those enrolled pay an annual premium equivalent to US$2. Women who attend four appointments during a pregnancy deliver at no cost.

The initial results are impressive. Child mortality has decreased by over 30 per cent since 2005 and maternal mortality declined by 25 per cent in the years up to 2005. A number of other areas of progress contributed to these results:

- an increase in assisted-birth deliveries from 39 per cent to 52 per cent between 2005 and 2007
- a rise in the use of family planning methods from 10 to 27 per cent between 2005 and 2007
- a decline in the fertility rate from 6.1 to 5.5 children per woman
- achievement of immunization rates of 95 per cent by 2008
- an increase in the use of insecticide-treated bed nets from 4 to 67 per cent of the population between 2004 and 2007, and
- a decrease in the HIV prevalence rate to 3 per cent.

Marie Rose Mukankudinye, one of Mayange's mothers who delivered her baby safely, could not be more satisfied. "I want to encourage as many people as possible to visit the health centre," she said. "Healthy children can go much further in life."

Rwanda's achievements are all the more welcome on a continent where overall progress towards these goals has been barely perceptible. They demonstrate what is possible when political will, innovative policy and sustained donor support work in concert.

Alarming mortality rates

Global maternal mortality statistics are alarming, and particularly so in Africa. Of the 536,000 women worldwide who die each year from complications of pregnancy or delivery, 99 per cent are in developing countries. Of those, half are in sub-Saharan Africa.

The deaths are the tip of the iceberg. For every one woman who dies, 20 more suffer injury, infection or lasting disabilities. For many, this brings an end to their mothering and caring roles, and can lead to removal from their families in disgrace. For example, fistula, a condition unknown in the industrialized world that can result from prolonged and obstructed labour and leaves survivors incontinent, frequently isolates women from their families and communities.

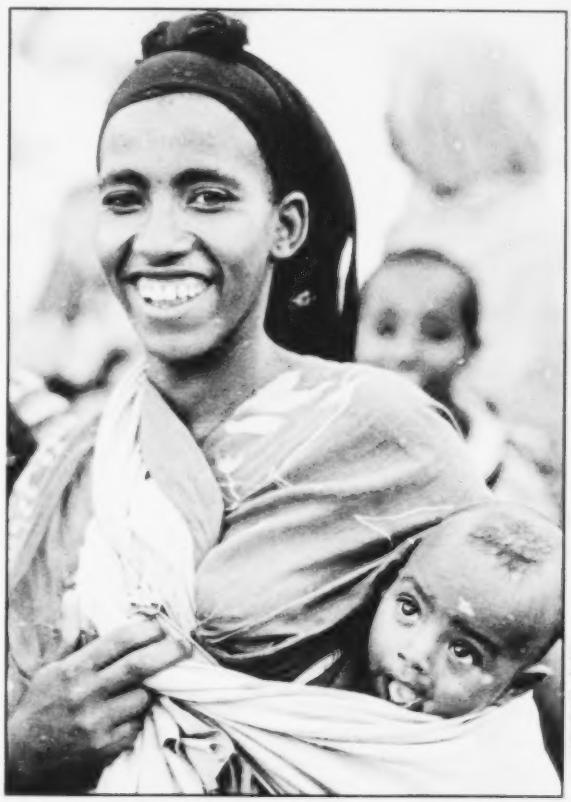
The statistics for child mortality are

equally alarming. Of the nearly 10 million children under the age of five who die worldwide each year, 99 per cent are from developing countries. Of those, 4 million die within the first 28 days of life, and half of those within the first 24 hours. In sub-Saharan Africa 160 children die for every 1,000 live births. In the UK, by comparison, the figure is six per 1,000.

For children whose mothers die, the cost can be high. Besides the emotional loss, they are robbed of the very person who would be the one most likely to maintain their health and care for them when they are sick. Studies by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) show that children are more likely to die by the age of two if their mother died within the first six weeks of their life.

Worldwide, child mortality has steadily declined over the past two decades. But there are indications that progress is slowing, and in some areas of sub-Saharan Africa an upward trend is becoming evident. Maternal mortality is declining far too slowly to come near to meeting the targets. In sub-Saharan Africa the annual rate of reduction is 0.1 per cent, far too slow to reach the goal of a 75 per cent reduction from 1990 to 2015.

It is widely acknowledged that the vast majority of these deaths and disabilities are preventable.



In Ethiopia, Rwanda and a few other African countries, improvements in care for expectant mothers and newborns are allowing many more to survive and remain healthy.

Innovative responses

The urgency of the situation has not gone unrecognized. One recent effort to boost progress towards the MDGs on child and maternal mortality has been led by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and World Bank President Robert Zoellick. A high-level meeting at the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2009 launched the report of the Taskforce on Innovative Financing for Health Systems, which the two officials had initiated with other world leaders a year earlier. The meeting called for stronger, better-financed health systems and better access to health services for women and children.

"Innovative financing" may be the key, given the state of the global economy, acknowledged Prime Minister Brown. He called on every country in the developed world to "help poorer nations trade their way out of recession and deliver essential health care to the most vulnerable." Action is urgently needed, he said, since the MDGs are "already well behind schedule."

Similar concerns about the MDGs were expressed at another high-level meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a month later. It was convened by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the government of the Netherlands to discuss maternal health, identified as making the least progress of all the MDGs. "We know what it would cost to meet our goals," stated UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid, "and, sadly, we know the cost of too little action."

The measures needed to reverse this crisis were spelled out by the "Consensus for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health," a programme launched at the UN meeting in September and spearheaded by a broad coalition of governments, non-governmental organizations, international health agencies and individuals. The consensus highlights the need for political leadership and community mobilization, with accountability at all levels. It also insists on adequate financial and human resources to ensure:

- effective health systems that deliver high-quality interventions
- the removal of financial barriers to access so that services to women and children are free, and
- skilled and motivated health workers, with the necessary infrastructure, drugs, equipment and regulations.

The projected price tag to achieve this was estimated at $30 bn from 2009 to 2015, with annual costs rising from $2.5 bn to $5.5 bn over the period. The task force on innovative financing identified some $5.3 bn that could be raised through voluntary contributions with the purchase of airline tickets, debt conversions, the expansion of existing immunization financing facilities and other innovative methods.

Women's status

Some argue that more than political will and increased funding is needed, given the other factors that hamper progress. These include child marriage, lower rates of education for girls and high illiteracy rates for women, lack of access to contraception, female genital mutilation, violence against women, lower nutritional levels for girls and women and the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and fistula.

Violations of women's rights have been identified by UNFPA and UNICEF as critical barriers to improved infant and maternal health. These are in turn connected to pervasive poverty and cultural attitudes. Achieving the MDG to promote gender equality and women's empowerment is

therefore intertwined with the goals on maternal and child health.

As UNICEF noted in its 2008 *Report Card on Maternal Mortality*, "The causes of maternal mortality and morbidity are so clear — as are the means to combat them — that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion they have remained unaddressed for so long due to women's disadvantageous social, political and economic status in many societies."

Aminata Touré, chief of the UNFPA's gender, human rights and culture branch, notes a paradox in the widespread failure to reduce maternal mortality. "In most societies in the world, motherhood is very valued and celebrated," Ms. Touré told *Africa Renewal*. "At the same time there is a deficit of attention and seriousness in terms of addressing the question of maternal mortality, so that it is highly unlikely that in many developing countries the goals relating to maternal health will be achieved."

Health clinic in Dosha, Ethiopia: Within just three years, the country nearly doubled its number of health workers, and maternal mortality rates declined dramatically.

Openings for progress

Stan Bernstein, a UNFPA senior policy adviser, points out that while the impact of gender inequity cannot be ignored, strong inroads have been made with sufficient political will and appropriate funding. "While there is room for skepticism, there are openings for some real progress. Some degree of skepticism can be constructive," he told *Africa Renewal*, "if it identifies bottlenecks and key constraints so that people's attention can be focused on how to respond to them."

Mr. Bernstein adds that there are already a number of countries showing how to reverse the figures. "These achievements have been possible because of political will, thoughtful policy decisions and adequate funding."

Rwanda is one example. Ethiopia is another. Within three years, Ethiopia has nearly doubled its health workforce, providing every village with two trained health extension workers, for a total of 30,000. They are employed full time as salaried civil servants, which represents a move away from the traditional reliance on volunteers. Most of the workers are local young women who have completed high school and are trained intensively for one year. Women who use the services are more likely to trust health workers who are also women.

The results have been tangible. Maternal mortality of 871 per 100,000 in 2000 decreased to 671 by 2005. If this trend is maintained, Ethiopia could reach the MDG goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75 per cent by the target year of 2015. While the under-five mortality rate is decreasing more slowly, the drop from 204 to 119 per 1,000 between 1990 and 2007 is significant.

Other health improvements could also help ensure that the goals are met. For instance, the upturn in the proportion of women using contraceptives from 27 per cent to 58 per cent over the past five years is likely to have an impact on how many children the average woman has. More spacing between births can significantly reduce both maternal and childhood mortality. So can the increase in the share of pregnant women receiving prenatal care from 50 per cent in 2005 to 60 per cent in 2009, and the rise in postnatal care from 16 per cent to 28 per cent over the same period.

Political leadership

Rwanda and Ethiopia demonstrate that considerable progress is possible when appropriate funds are available and political leaderships act to change policies. Both countries have seen improvements in women's equality.

Other countries are taking their own initiatives. Burundi is providing free health care to all children under five and to pregnant women. Malawi is extending free health services through government- and church-run hospitals. Sierra Leone is planning to provide free health care to women and children. Ghana will exempt pregnant women, children under 18 and the elderly from health insurance premiums. Liberia is hoping to abolish user fees for health services with the help of donor financing.

For Africa and other parts of the world, the challenges remain daunting. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted at the UN meeting in September, "We still have a long way to go to reach the goal of reducing child mortality rates.... And we have a long road to travel to reduce maternal mortality," he said.

But these goals are achievable, Mr. Ban added. "We know what to do. We know what it takes to save lives. We know how to improve the health of women, babies and children. It is said that a society can be judged by how it treats women and children. Just as no woman should die needlessly in childbirth, no person of conscience should stand by as such senseless deaths continue." ■

Security reform key to protecting women

Training, recruitment and prosecutions can reduce violence

By **Ernest Harsch**

The massacre of nearly 200 opposition demonstrators in Conakry, Guinea, in late September 2009 shocked Africa and the world. Beyond the sheer brutality of the crackdown, one feature was particularly stunning to many survivors and observers — the systematic rape of scores of women.

"We didn't know the soldiers were going to harm us," one injured woman said to a foreign reporter. A 35-year-old teacher later told investigators for the New York based Human Rights Watch that members of the elite Presidential Guard grabbed her. "Two held me down while the other raped me.... Then the second one raped me, then the third."

Sadly, the experiences of these Guinean women are not isolated cases. Sexual and other violence against women has been a feature of conflicts across Africa, from Sierra Leone and Liberia to Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Even in countries not at war, women are commonly raped, beaten and victimized in other ways. Only rarely do police or prosecutors take such crimes seriously. Even worse, policemen and soldiers — whose job supposedly is to protect citizens — have all too often been among the abusers.

Here and there, however, steps are being taken to reform Africa's security institutions to increase their ability — and willingness — to safeguard women. Police in Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Africa now have specialized units on sexual and domestic violence, while Liberia has courts dedicated to prosecuting sexual crimes.

A number of countries are recruiting more women into their police forces, and to a lesser extent into their armies. That has helped to change their exclusively male cultures and has pushed them to take gender-based violence more seriously. In the DRC, where rape has been exceptionally widespread in the war-torn eastern provinces, scores of government soldiers — who once enjoyed virtual impunity — are finally facing military tribunals, with some receiving long sentences for rape and other crimes against civilians.

A female soldier in the government army in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. New staffing, improved training and other reforms are needed so that Africa's security forces can better protect women.

'Twin approach'

But such improvements remain limited, notes Ecoma Alaga, an expert on gender and security sector reform (SSR) for the non-governmental Women Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-Africa), headquartered in Accra, Ghana. Especially in countries marked by armed conflict, violence against women has been increasing, with rape often used as a weapon of war, she explains in a paper presented to a 15 September seminar in New York organized by the UN's Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA).

Frequently, Ms. Alaga points out, the security sector in Africa "finds itself falling short in its responsibility" to protect women, and "is itself often a direct threat to the security of women." While it is imperative to overhaul Africa's security sectors generally, to make them more effective and responsive to citizens' concerns, it is especially important for such reforms to put more emphasis on overcoming gender discrimination and on protecting women, she argues.

For that to happen, Ms. Alaga maintains, a "twin approach" is required. On the one hand, those who design and carry out security reforms need to pay greater attention to gender issues and to actively involve women in all phases of reform programmes. On the other hand, women's groups must themselves stop viewing security as "men's business" and insist on a greater voice and role in deciding how armies, police, courts and other institutions are restructured.

Such a process will not be easy, said Adedeji Ebo, who chairs the UN's inter-agency task force on security sector reform. Africa's armies and police forces were originally set up when most of the continent was under colonial rule, he noted at the OSAA seminar. So at the outset they "were never created to protect Africans," but were instead viewed by the colonial

authorities as instruments for extracting taxes and for "keeping the natives in check." Even after independence, Mr. Ebo added, many African governments perpetuated or recreated similar security structures.

But as more African countries seek to rebuild after debilitating wars or to democratize repressive political systems, more are also trying to professionalize their armies, police forces, intelligence services and court systems. The ultimate aim is to bring their security sectors under the control of elected civilian leaders and to make them more attentive to popular aspirations (see *Africa Renewal*, April 2009).

Yet so far, argues Ms. Alaga, SSR efforts in Africa have been top-down and "elitist." They also have been confined to specific institutions rather than tackling the security sector as a whole and have focused mainly on technical and logistical issues, not on the more fundamental questions of how the army, police and courts are governed. Gender concerns have been incorporated only sporadically.

"The protection of women requires a comprehensive system-wide approach," Ms. Alaga insists. For violence to decline, security forces must ensure basic public safety, police need to investigate and apprehend perpetrators and courts must bring to trial and imprison those found guilty.

The current "piecemeal" approach to SSR has brought some partial gains, Ms. Alaga acknowledges. Moreover, these efforts highlight the kind of measures that can significantly improve conditions for women if they are pursued more systematically.

Cleaning out the ranks

In countries where armies have been especially notorious for brutalizing civilians, one of the most obvious reform measures is to rid them of personnel guilty of serious abuses.

After more than a decade of civil war, Liberia began building a new army in 2006. Although members of the old government armed forces and of demobilized rebel groups were permitted to apply, the selection criteria were very rigorous. "Vetting" panels assessed the qualifications of each applicant, turning away anyone known to have engaged in abuses. The names and photos of applicants were published and circulated in local communities, and the general public was invited to come forth with any information that would disqualify a candidate. In the end, three quarters were rejected.

In the DRC a peace agreement in 2002 also provided for the creation of a new national army. But the process of vetting the ranks was much more limited than in Liberia. Often entire units from the previous factions were incorporated into the new Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), with only a few of the most notorious officers excluded or subject to criminal charges.

Despite the peace accord, fighting has continued in the DRC's eastern provinces between the FARDC and a complex array of dissident factions, local militia groups and foreign fighters (mostly from neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda). Many Congolese villagers have been killed and hundreds of thousands have been displaced from their homes. Women often have been brutalized and raped.

Monitors from the UN and human rights organizations ascribe much of the abuse to anti-government groups. But they frequently cite evidence that undisciplined soldiers from the FARDC have also raped, pillaged and killed — with little fear of punishment.

In June 2009 President Joseph Kabila proclaimed a "zero tolerance" policy for the FARDC. Henceforth, he vowed, any soldier, "whatever his rank," involved in theft, rape, human rights abuses or a failure to protect civilians would be arrested and brought before military courts. Scores of rank-and-file FARDC soldiers have been tried. In late July, 10 officers also were found guilty of rape and other war crimes by a military tribunal in Rutshuru, in the province of North Kivu.

But the Congolese army still has a long way to go before it can be transformed into a force that respects the rights of women and other citizens. In November UN investigators confirmed that FARDC troops had killed some 60 civilians in one incident alone during an offensive against Rwandan rebels in early 2009. That same month, peacekeepers of the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) suspended all support for army units involved in such killings. A report by a UN expert group in late November cited even more evidence of killings, rapes and illegal mining operations by FARDC commanders and troops.

A theatre group in the Congo performing a scene on violence against women, to educate people more widely about the social scourge.

Citing "lack of progress in the area of security sector reform" in a December 2009 report, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the Congolese authorities to thoroughly vet the FARDC and bring to justice those involved in serious abuses.

General Monzili Zabili, a veteran Congolese army commander, estimates that it will take at least three years of intensive training and restructuring to create a truly "republican army." What exists now, he says, is a "regroupment of several private militias" that were brought together after peace accords but not yet fully integrated into a cohesive, disciplined army.

Training and staffing

As General Monzili emphasizes, training is important for changing the outlooks and conduct of military and police personnel. Draft legislation currently before the Congolese legislature proposes a range of reforms for the FARDC and national police, including restructuring, changes in command methods, and training in technical and "moral" subjects. Instructors from MONUC and the European Union who have been working with Congolese army and police units already teach courses on human rights and gender issues.

Similarly, in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Africa, reports Ms. Alaga, questions of women's rights and gender-based violence have been integrated into military and police curricula and training programmes.

While essential, training on its own can have only a limited impact in transforming the orientation of overwhelmingly male security forces. Changes in staffing are also vital, advocates for women's rights argue, both to alter the overall culture of those structures and to carry out particular tasks to help protect women. There are some roles that "women alone can perform to enhance the institutions' operational effectiveness," Ms. Alaga argues.

Liberia — which produced Africa's first democratically elected female president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf — has made especially pronounced efforts to change the gender composition of security forces. When recruitment for the new national army commenced, President Johnson-Sirleaf announced a goal of achieving a military that would be 20 per cent female. But it proved difficult to find enough women willing to enlist who could also meet the minimum qualification of a high school education. The actual proportion of female army recruits is currently around 5 per cent.

Greater progress has been made in the Liberian National Police, for which the target was also 20 per cent. With the help of nearly 60 female instructors from the UN peacekeeping mission, the first all-female class of police cadets graduated in 2009, bringing the force's total proportion of women to 12 per cent. Earlier the president named a woman, Beatrice Munah Sieh, as inspector general of police.

To further improve female recruitment into the Liberian police without compromising the educational requirements, an "accelerated learning" programme was introduced. Young women applicants who have not completed a secondary education are enrolled at a local polytechnic school to obtain their certificates.

South Africa, which has been recruiting female troops and police since it started restructuring its security forces in the mid-1990s, has recently increased its quota for both institutions to 40 per cent in an effort to speed the process. After a "gender mainstreaming" audit highlighted shortcomings at the command levels of the South African National Defence Force, eight female brigadier generals were appointed in 2007.

Legal action

While African conflicts hold particular dangers for women, abuse is also common in countries at "peace." Even in the DRC, only an estimated 3 per cent of all rapes and other sexual assaults nationwide are perpetrated by members of armed groups. To counter the broader scourge of such violence, the police and courts must become more active and effective in pursuing such crimes.

But across Africa, women's access to justice remains very limited. The reasons include the weakness of the courts (which scarcely exist outside the larger towns), high court fees, corruption and ignorance of the law by potential plaintiffs, lawyers and even judges.

But some improvements are under way. In a number of countries, including Rwanda, laws on rape and sexual violence have been strengthened in recent years. Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Africa have established specialized units within

see page 20

Graduates of the police academy in Liberia. Under President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the country has set quotas for recruiting more women into both its police force and army.

Environmental and community groups marching in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 12 December, one of many demonstrations around the world demanding stronger global action.

An African chorus on climate change

From activists to presidents, a call for urgent global action

Across the African continent scientists, public personalities, farmers, environmental activists and even presidents have become more vocal in urging global action to counter climate change and help poor countries cope with its varied impacts. An immediate focus was the 7–19 December UN international climate change conference in Copenhagen, which concluded a limited agreement to combat global warming (see page 3). But much work lies ahead, and many Africans agree that their governments need to press harder, both internationally and at home.

'We are not here as victims'

***Meles Zenawi**, prime minister of Ethiopia and the African Union's chief negotiator for the Copenhagen talks, speaking at the Copenhagen summit on 16 December.*

Every one of us knows that Africa has contributed virtually nothing to global warming, but has been hit first and hardest. The fragility of our eco-system has meant that for Africans the damage of climate change is not something that could happen in the future. It is already here with us, sowing misery and death across the land. Africa is indeed paying with the misery and death of its people for the wealth and well-being that was created in the developed countries through carbon-intensive development. That is fundamentally unjust.

But we are not here as victims nursing our wounds of injustice of the past. Africa is a continent of the future; it is destined to be a growth pole of the 21st century. We are therefore here not as victims of the past but as stakeholders of the future, reaching out across the continents, so that together we can build a better and fairer future for all of us.

Not only has Africa contributed virtually nothing to the current level of carbon emissions, but it is unlikely under any scenario to be a significant polluter in the future. Africa is a green field that can and wants to chart a different course of development, one that is not carbon-intensive....

We are not here to preach or to grandstand. We are here to negotiate, to give and take and seal a fair deal, however messy such a deal might be....

On start-up funding, I propose:

- Support the establishment of a start-up fund of $10 bn per annum for the three years of 2010–2012, to be used to address urgent adaptation and mitigation tasks, including forestry, and to prepare plans for more ambitious programmes in the future....
- Demand that 40 per cent of the start-up fund be earmarked for Africa....

On long-term finance, I propose:

- That funding for adaptation and mitigation start by 2013 to reach up to $50 bn per annum by 2015 and $100 bn per annum by 2020.
- That no less than 50 per cent of the fund should be allocated for

adaptation to vulnerable and poor countries and regions, such as Africa and the small island states....

I know my proposal today will disappoint those Africans who from the point of justice have asked for full compensation of the damage done to our development prospects. My proposal dramatically scales back our expectations with regards to the level of funding, in return for more reliable funding and a seat at the table in the management of such a fund.

I believe that there is an important underlying principle here. Africa loses more than most if there is no agreement on climate change. We lose more not only because our ecology is more fragile but also because our best days are ahead and lack of agreement here could murder our future even before it is born.

Because we have more to lose than others, we have to be prepared to be flexible and be prepared to go the extra mile to accommodate others. That is exactly what my proposal is intended to achieve.

'The African leadership must be responsible'

***Wangari Maathai**, leader of Kenya's Green Belt Movement and 2004 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, speaking at the African Development Bank in Tunis, Tunisia, on 27 October.*

Common natural resources like land, forests, rivers, wetlands, lakes and wildlife are essential for the survival of communities, but they cannot be protected unless the country has good governance: responsible, accountable and indeed visionary governance and leadership that manages the natural resources for the common good of all....

In many countries the greatest threat to the natural resources is the ruling elites, who use their political power and privileges to assign these resources to themselves, their friends, supporters and fellow tribesmen. They also facilitate the exploitation of the same resources by outsiders, so that resource-rich nations in Africa enrich outsiders rather than their own citizens....

With the threat of climate change, many of the developed countries will use their technology, creativity and awareness to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Many of them are already involved in political, economic, social and legislative changes to adapt and mitigate against the climate change.

In Africa, we are told that the region will be disproportionately adversely impacted since it accounts for meager greenhouse gases, but the negative impact will be huge.... While climate change will no doubt exacerbate the situation, we make ourselves very vulnerable by continuing to both neglect and mismanage our environment....

Whatever the outcome in Copenhagen, it is important for us Africans to be responsible for our destiny. The African leadership must be responsible for their people. So let us not wait for other regions to save us from the negative impact of climate change. We should not only focus on the money the developed world will provide and the technology they may be willing to transfer. We might fail to access those resources or purchase those technologies if we are not prepared....

Therefore, adequate preparation for implementation and adoption is paramount in Africa. The responsibility to save Africa for Africa must surely lie with the African leaderships and their citizens.

Reduce emissions without retarding development

***Jacob Zuma**, president of South Africa, in an address to the Copenhagen summit on 18 December.*

Climate change is a practical matter for the developing world, especially Africa. For countries such as South Africa, weather patterns in coastal provinces are already wreaking havoc on the lives of our people, which makes this challenge a reality that we are already confronting....

Some facts are already well known. Developed countries are historically responsible for 80 per cent of the current emissions in the atmosphere. Developing countries are most affected by climate change. As they justifiably pursue their own development paths, it is expected that developing countries' emissions will increase.

In the long term, we need an agreement that recognizes the common responsibilities of all nations to reduce emissions, while not retarding the development of developing countries. Our view remains that all developed countries must commit to ambitious, legally binding emission reduction targets.... Developing countries should commit to nationally appropriate mitigation action, to achieve a decline in emissions relative to business as usual. This would be conditional on finance, technology and capacity-building support from developed countries.

Developing countries are ready to play their part in reducing global emissions, but obviously rich countries have to take the lead. With financial and technical support from developed countries, South Africa for example will be able to reduce emissions by 34 per cent below "business as usual" levels by 2020 and by 42 per cent by 2025.

'Chart a new course to sustainable development'

***John Atta Mills**, president of Ghana, speaking at the Copenhagen summit on 17 December.*

Ghana will pursue a low-carbon development growth path, even though our emissions currently are very insignificant. My delegation is here to share ideas, exchange views, and to confront one of the greater political challenges of this century and to chart a new course to sustainable development....

It has been sufficiently reported that climate change has the potential to push many developing countries back into the poverty trap and [reverse] progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. With the need to adapt to a changing climate, development will be much more costly and many populations will suffer further severe stress.

Africa's weak ability to adapt to these additional stresses further increases its vulnerability and heightens the risk of agricultural decline, chronic hunger, water shortage, deteriorating health,

biodiversity loss, among others. Hence, for Ghana, action on climate change and on development cannot be separated....

So far, the mid-term targets for emissions reductions announced, particularly by developed countries, do not seem ambitious enough to help us achieve the long-term goal and save our planet.

Ghana is a net greenhouse [gas] remover as [its] forests store carbon; therefore, reducing forest degradation, as well as conserving and sustainably managing forests, can provide immediate and substantial mitigation benefits. However, a major concern of developing countries is that these mitigation actions should not divert much-needed resources from poverty reduction and economic growth.

'Climate change threatens human dignity'

***James Alix Michel**, president of the Seychelles, in a message on 23 September:*

For small islands, climate change is about our existence. It is about maintaining our human right to live and work in the land of our birth, the land of our parents. We must act now to ensure that our islands are also the land of our children.

Millions of people around the world are living on the edge of an abyss. Recent studies show that assuming current rates of warming, the sea will rise more than 1.4 metres in less than 100 years. And emissions continue to grow. Warming continues to accelerate — and if we do nothing that 100 years will very easily become 50. Islanders face forced displacement and destruction of our already fragile economies.

Climate change threatens the very concept of human dignity. For small islands and least developed countries, the road towards Copenhagen is about survival. The progress made so far is unacceptable. And proposed compromises are simply a means of shifting the debate to future generations....

I take the opportunity to call on the developed world to use the advanced technology at their disposal to take the lead in cutting emissions. Cutting emissions will cost. But let us ensure that it is a cost that is shared. If things remain the same, the biggest cost is borne by the poor farmer in Africa and the fishermen in our islands. The cost of acting to reduce climate change is far less than proceeding on the same route we are currently stuck in.

'Climate change begins at home'

***The East African**, a daily newspaper published in Nairobi, Kenya, in an editorial entitled "Climate Change Begins at Home" on 19 October:*

The flurry of meetings on climate change . . . in the run-up to the global summit in December in Copenhagen have illustrated just how contentious and divisive the subject is. The major cause of the polarization is the general feeling by developing countries that their developed counterparts have saddled them, through their egregious production of greenhouse gases, with the devastating effects of the phenomenon, including extreme weather and the spread of diseases into new locales.

It is this sense of victimhood that is driving these countries ... to demand that the richer states pay what amounts to compensation.... While such demands are understandable there is a need, as Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga pointed out ... for poor countries to adopt more comprehensive policies that go beyond donor support or compensation.

The adoption of such policies is particularly prudent because there is no evidence that richer countries, many of which are currently going through economic decline, will agree to pay compensation....

In the event, poor nations must make parallel efforts to develop homegrown programmes to mitigate the effects of global warming. Such programmes should encompass innovations such as the trade in carbon credits by both the private and public sectors, as well as investments in renewable energy.

As they prepare for Copenhagen, poor countries must realize that developing locally sustainable programmes to mitigate global warming will be a better bet than crying out for reparations, which will be akin to waiting for Godot.

'We have the power to turn tides'

***Desmond Tutu**, former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, and 1984 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, in an op-ed article published in major newspapers around the world in late October:*

Even a few years ago most developing nations viewed climate change as one more trouble to which they could, with sufficient aid, adapt. But after Arctic sea ice melted so dramatically in the summer of 2007, climate scientists began re-evaluating their predictions — the earth was reacting more violently than expected to even small temperature increases.

It became clear that for many countries basic survival was at stake.... Kenya's ongoing drought, with the deaths of thousands of cattle and devastating crop failures that have accompanied it, is giving us a vivid picture of what uncontrolled climate change might bring to the African continent....

Normally, voices from places like Ethiopia, the Maldives and Kenya are sidelined in international forums. But this time it may be different, because a huge, positive and determined civil society movement is building around the world to support just, fair and scientific climate targets....

People in almost all the nations of the earth are involved — it's the same kind of coalition that helped make the word "apartheid" known around the world.

I ask all those around the world who care about Africa to support climate fairness ... by starting or joining an awareness-raising action where they live. It is a chance for us to act as global citizens, not as isolated individuals and lonely consumers. It is a chance for world leaders to listen to voices of conscience, not to those who speak only about financial markets. In South Africa we showed that if we act on the side of justice, we have the power to turn tides; tomorrow we have a chance to start turning the tide of climate change. ■

Climate deal

from page 3

environment minister, Batilda Burian, regarded the US commitment to lower emissions by 17 per cent from its 2005 levels as "a major success" of the summit.

Financial promises

Africa and other developing countries have long argued that since the major industrialized nations contribute the most to global warming, they should shoulder the costs. Poor countries expect major financial assistance, both to help them adapt to the effects of climate change and to enable them to pursue economic development in ways that do not despoil the environment.

The Copenhagen Accord accepts that principle. The developed countries commit themselves to provide developing countries with "new and additional resources" of up to $30 bn over the three years of 2010–12. The least developed countries, small island developing states and Africa would be given priority in allocations of funds earmarked for "adaptation."

The accord established a goal of increasing financing to some $100 bn annually by 2020, provided that developing countries take their own actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure the transparent use of external funding.

Some delegates from developing countries wanted considerably higher amounts. The African Union had estimated earlier in the year that all developing countries would need $67 bn annually by 2020 to adapt to the effects of climate change, plus an additional $200 bn a year to help them reduce greenhouse emissions, convert to cleaner energy sources and preserve their forests.

Yet at the conference Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles, representing the African Union, cited only the lower figures that were ultimately included in the accord. He recognized that his proposal would disappoint some Africans, but argued that it was better to scale back Africa's expectations "in return for more reliable funding and a seat at the table in the management of such a fund" (see page 12).

But for many delegates, the reliability of such funds remains in doubt. President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso wanted some assurance that they would not be diverted from existing aid budgets, while others pointed to the donor countries' long record of unmet promises.

South African President Jacob Zuma (left, sitting next to Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and US President Barack Obama) during a negotiating session at the climate change conference in Copenhagen. Africa played a constructive role in the talks.

A strong African voice

Months before the conference the African Union decided that the continent should participate in a more united, coherent manner than it often does at such international gatherings, by designating Prime Minister Meles as the lead negotiator. As a result, African technical and policy experts met regularly each morning to coordinate their work in the various committee meetings and drafting sessions. African countries also played prominent roles in other groupings, with Sudan chairing the Group of 77 and Lesotho leading the least-developed countries.

On 14 December, amidst signs that some countries were considering a bid to abandon the Kyoto Protocol, the African delegates brought the conference to a brief standstill by walking out. The talks soon resumed, and the Kyoto Protocol remained intact.

South Africa, as Africa's most industrialized economy and a notable source of greenhouse emissions, was able to play an especially pivotal role. Acknowledging that responsibility, President Zuma pledged that his country could cut emissions by 34 per cent by 2020 and by 42 per cent by 2025, with some international financial and technical support.

As the talks headed towards stalemate, President Zuma consulted with other African leaders about the possibility of walking out. South African negotiator Joanne Yawitch later told reporters. But they decided it would be better to stay and continue influencing the process from the inside. President Zuma and several other African officials, including Mr. Meles and representatives from Lesotho and Algeria, participated in a series of informal meetings of about 30 countries that negotiated the final text of the Copenhagen Accord. Had they not taken part, Ms. Yawitch commented, "maybe what we have now would have been worse."

African environmental activists argue that such African purpose will remain vital in the next rounds of climate talks — a two-week negotiating session in Bonn, Germany, at midyear and another high-level UN conference in Mexico City towards the end of 2010.

Copenhagen failed to achieve an equitable, legally binding agreement, Mamadou Barry, coordinator of the Coalition of Senegalese Youth on Climate Change, said in Dakar on 23 December. But it was significant that African leaders took part in a coordinated fashion. In the coming talks, he said, African leaders should "maintain their unity so that climate justice can become a reality for the continent." ■

Abolishing fees boosts African schooling

A giant step for children, but governments must navigate the pitfalls

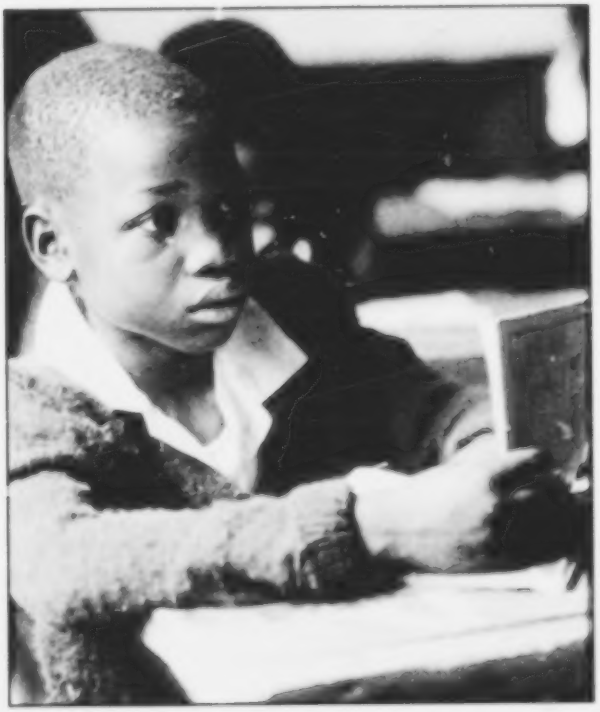
By **Michael Fleshman**

When the Kenyan government announced it would stop charging fees for primary school education — just days before the beginning of the 2003 school year — the result was pandemonium. Teachers, headmasters and parents scrambled to find desks, pencils and books for over a million extra students.

But the policy shift also provided a stepping stone into the record books for 84-year-old Kimani Ng'ang'a Maruge, who, according to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, became the oldest person ever to enroll in Standard 1 when he appeared before astonished teachers and fellow pupils in 2004. "I wanted to learn how to read the Bible," an ambition previously frustrated by the high cost of schooling, he later told Voice of America journalist Cathy Majtenyi in 2008. "The preachers mislead people. That is why I am back in school."

Despite economic hard times and the violence that swept parts of the country after the 2007 elections, UNICEF, the UN children's agency, reports that the abolition of school fees has had the intended effect of vastly increasing access to education. The number of primary students in Kenya has increased by nearly 2 million.

Encouragingly, the dropout rate, an important measurement of affordability and educational quality, has also fallen. The share of students completing primary school jumped from 62.8 per cent in 2002, the last year fees were charged, to 76.2 per cent two years later as fewer poor children were forced out for nonpayment.



By eliminating fees, Kenya was able to quickly get 2 million more pupils into its primary schools.

A step towards education for all

These impressive numbers have led most Kenyan educators and their international partners to conclude that the abolition of school fees and the policy reforms that accompanied it have been a success, despite continuing worries about financing, class sizes and teacher quality. In fact, the lifting of fees in Kenya and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa has proved to be a giant step forward for access to education by millions of the region's poor. It has helped Africa make progress towards its goal of finding a place in school for all its children (see *Africa Renewal*, April 2005).

Over the last 15 years a number of other countries, including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Ethiopia, Malawi and Mozambique, have also experienced explosive growth in primary school enrolment following the elimination of fees. The UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that between 2000 and 2007 overall primary school enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa rose by 42 per cent — the greatest rate of increase in the world. As a result, the percentage of African children in primary school increased from 58 to 74 per cent. A few African countries, including Botswana, Cape Verde, Togo and Mauritius, could achieve universal primary enrolment by 2015, one of the targets in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted by world leaders in 2000 to reduce poverty and advance human well-being across the globe.

But the increase in school attendance is only a start. Despite the surge in enrolment, almost half of the 72 million children out of school worldwide in 2007 lived in sub-Saharan Africa. Dropout rates in many African countries remain high. Analysts note that global recession, combined with other urgent problems, has put additional pressure on already meagre budgets.

Planning and finance are crucial

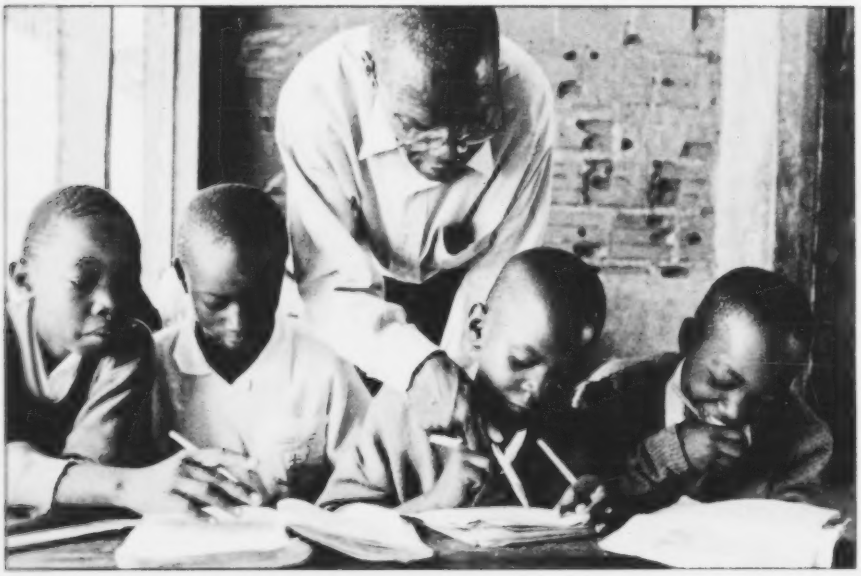
The demand for free and universal primary education has its roots in the colonial era, when the colonial authorities restricted African access to schooling, or, as in the case of apartheid South Africa, developed racially segregated and unequal systems. Access to education was therefore a key popular demand at independence, and newly independent governments invested heavily in schools and teachers. Enrolment typically soared, but in the absence of adequate financing and trained teachers and administrators, further expansion proved unsustainable.

Nevertheless, in the years following independence a number of countries, including Kenya, Malawi and Ghana, attempted to end school fees, but without

success. The arrival in the 1990s of austerity policies promoted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and the resulting reduction of education budgets, often accompanied by increases in fees, is widely considered a major contributor to the continent's low enrolment rates.

In a detailed analysis of the abolition of primary school fees in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique by the World Bank and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF),* researchers describe fees as one of the "major barriers" to access to education for the poor. The U.N.'s MDG Monitor website (www.mdgmonitor.org), which tracks progress towards the goals, estimates that school fees and other mandatory charges, such as uniform costs and dues for parent-teacher associations, consume an average 25 per cent of poor families' household budgets in Africa. But except for the costly fees often assessed on parents in wealthy districts, the sums collected are too small to dramatically improve the quality of learning.

In the view of most education advocates, school fees served more as a barrier to the poor than as a source of finance for good education.



To help cover its sudden increase in new enrolments, Kenya reassigned teachers from overstaffed areas to those in greater need of instructors.

Doing things right — and fast

But abolishing fees, by itself, is not enough. The World Bank/UNICEF study also found that innovative policies and educational reform following the abolition of fees could spell the difference between success and failure. In Kenya, the researchers argued, the government did a number of things right — and did them quickly.

Like many other efforts to abolish school fees, the initiative came in fulfillment of campaign pledges, in this case by the winner of the December 2002 Presidential election, Mwai Kibaki. But with only a week between the announcement of the election results and the new school year, the new government went into what the study calls "crisis mode," summoning senior officials of the Education and Finance Ministries, donors and others to map out a strategy for implementing the plan.

The first step was to mobilize support among parents, teachers and administrators. The second was to find the money. The government released $6.8 mn in emergency grants — $380 per primary school — to cover immediate needs like exercise books, pencils and other supplies.

Donors stepped up as well, with the World Bank, the Swedish government and others contributing $82 mn in additional funding over the next two years. Overall, the government reported, domestic spending on education increased from about $703 mn in the school year of 2001/02 to $951 mn in 2003/04, a third of the national budget.

With public support and minimum financing set, the government then embarked on a major overhaul of the primary school financing system. Rather than channel funds through the Education Ministry, the government chose instead to provide student grants directly to individual schools. The schools were required to set up two bank accounts, one for school supplies and another for non-teacher salaries, building maintenance and the like. Headmasters, teachers and school managers were trained in basic financial management and bookkeeping. The Education Ministry's auditing department was expanded to provide greater oversight.

Teachers and textbooks

Despite the huge increase in students, the number of teachers in Kenyan primary schools has increased slowly amidst government concerns that hiring large numbers of unqualified teachers would lower instructional quality and increase costs. By reassigning teachers from overstaffed areas to understaffed districts and running some schools in double shifts, Kenya kept its national pupil-to-teacher ratio from rising beyond 40 to 1 in 2004. Ratios were much higher in some provinces, however.

The government also managed to reach its target of one textbook for every three students in most subjects — an improvement in many poorly performing, largely rural districts that were not given priority for teachers and supplies before 2003. As a result, 14 of the 21 worst-performing districts in the country slightly improved their student test scores between 2002 and 2005. This evidence, the researchers say, shows that combining fee abolition with reforms has had a "positive impact on learning."

Disparities

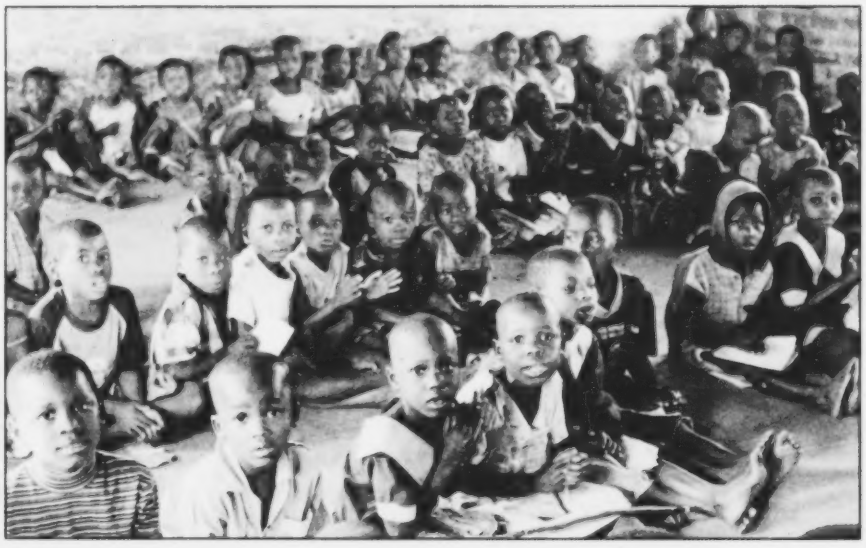
That did not mean that the end of school fees and the reforms that followed have

* *Abolishing School Fees in Africa: Lessons from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique*. Published by the World Bank, 2009. Online: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/9780821375402.pdf

solved all of Kenya's education problems. As the World Bank/UNICEF report notes, the influx of students in 2003 triggered an exodus of wealthier students to private schools, worsening longstanding income disparities within the national education system. Nor has the abolition of formal fees removed all the burdens from financially strapped families.

"To call it free education is misleading," Gerald Mwangi, a father of three in central Kenya, told Inter Press Service in early 2009. "For my youngest daughter in Standard 4 I still have to pay for food, transport and uniform, which adds up to 5,000 shillings [about $70] per term."

And although Kenya is credited with maintaining the existing quality of education despite the increase in student population and class sizes, the inability of many students to read and do mathematics at their grade level remains a major concern.



Malawi primary school. The abolition of school fees greatly increased school enrolment, but without sufficient teachers or adequate funding, educational quality suffered.

Malawi struggles to cope

Other countries have been less successful. Malawi eliminated its school fees in 1994. But with less than half of Kenya's gross domestic product per person and fewer financial and human resources to draw on, it still faces difficult challenges in providing universal primary education.

As in many other African countries, notes the study, "the adoption of universal primary education was triggered by political demands rather than by rational planning processes." Although Malawi had lifted some fees for Standards 1 and 2 and waived primary education fees for girls prior to 1994, the decision to eliminate all fees coincided with the return of multiparty elections that year. The focus, the researchers found, was on increasing enrolment. "Very little attention was paid to quality issues."

Nor was it possible to mobilize public and political support in the short time between the decision to lift fees and the beginning of school. Among Malawi's external partners only UNICEF initially supported the fee abolition. When over a million new students showed up for class, the study reports, the government found itself struggling to cope "after the fact."

One immediate response was to hire 20,000 new teachers, almost all of whom were secondary school graduates who were given only two weeks of training. Plans to provide on-the-job training failed to materialize. Instructional quality declined sharply as the pupil-teacher ratio climbed to 70 to 1.

The lack of facilities meant that many classes met under trees, and books and teaching materials arrived months late, if at all. Despite increases in the education budget, spending per student, already low, declined by about 25 per cent and contributed to the decline in quality. As a result nearly 300,000 students dropped out during the first year, and high dropout rates continue to this day.

Overall, reports the study, only about 20 per cent of boys and girls successfully complete eight years of primary education in Malawi. This is largely a function of the country's deep poverty, the researchers say, and the lack of resources, such as nutrition programmes, to help poor children remain in school.

Time to innovate and improve

In the end, say the experts, a dual lesson can be drawn from the Kenyan and Malawian experiences. The abolition of school fees is a precondition for getting large numbers of poor children into school, but it must be accompanied by strong public and political support, sound planning and reform, and increased financing.

After systems adjust to the surge in enrolment, they argue, resources must be directed at improving quality and meeting the needs of the very poor, those in distant rural areas and children with disabilities. The analysts say that a particular focus should be girls, who face a range of obstacles to attending and staying in school, including cultural attitudes that devalue education for women. Improved sanitation and facilities and better safety and security conditions can make it easier to keep girls in school.

Despite the difficulties, UNICEF primary education specialist Dina Craissati told *Africa Renewal*, governments and donors should see the abolition of school fees and the need to accommodate a flood of new students as catalysts for innovation and improvement in every aspect of primary education. They also make it necessary to plan for the arrival of hundreds of thousands of additional students in the secondary school system.

"The abolition of school fees should not be seen as a problem, but as an opportunity," Ms. Craissati said. With careful planning, adequate financing and determined leadership, she concluded, Africa can find a place in school for all its children. ■

Progress on AIDS

from page 5

reducing the number of orphans and the number of children born with HIV."

Entrenched economic and social inequalities and cultural attitudes towards women, however, make overcoming gender aspects of the pandemic particularly challenging. For this reason Mr. Sidibé welcomed the announcement last September of the creation of a new UN women's "super agency" that would consolidate the UN's scattered gender-related activities under one roof and make them more effective. "We are hopeful that the creation of a new UN agency on women will help address the issue of gender inequality and advance the rights of women and girls, particularly in Africa. UNAIDS will work closely with the new agency to promote women's access to health and development [and] deliver critical maternal and child health services to women and girls at the grassroots level."

Anti-retroviral medicines at a health clinic. AIDS are becoming more widely available in Africa.

Challenges ahead

Building on these modest signs of progress in the battle against AIDS will be vital if the continent is to make strides towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which include achieving universal access to treatment by the end of 2010 and halting and beginning to reverse the spread of the virus by 2015.

But the challenges are still formidable, Mr. Sidibe observes, including:

- unaffordable medicines
- insufficient and unpredictable funding
- weak health systems
- the failure to tailor HIV prevention and treatment programmes to local conditions, and
- stigma and discrimination against vulnerable populations.

Mr. Sidibe affirms that prejudice against homosexuals is a particular concern in Africa, noting that "men who have sex with men are often denied access to HIV prevention and treatment programmes. UNAIDS believes the criminalization of any group of people at risk of HIV increases stigma and discrimination. Experience has shown us that effective responses to HIV are those grounded in human rights, tolerance and unimpeded access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support."

He goes on to say, "Reports of arbitrary arrest, violence and other forms of discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation have occurred in many countries. In the case of Senegal, international groups — including UNAIDS — assisted in the release of nine gay men who were imprisoned since December 2008."

Human rights and health advocates have also raised concerns about legislation under consideration in Uganda. If enacted, the bill would impose the death penalty on sexually active HIV-positive homosexuals under some circumstances and require family, friends and employers to report homosexuals to authorities under penalty of imprisonment.

Financing is another obstacle. "Although funding for the global AIDS response has grown over the years, there is still a funding gap," the UNAIDS head explains. "In 2008, $15.6 bn was estimated to be available from all sources for HIV, leaving a funding gap of $6.5 billion." For 2010, he says, the global need will rise to $25 bn — half of which will be in Africa.

Funding under fire

The prospects for raising that amount, he admits, are not good. "Even though we do not yet know what the full impact of the economic crisis will be on HIV programmes, we are already seeing adverse effects of the crisis on national and local AIDS responses, such as declines in household incomes, increases in poverty levels and reductions in national government spending on HIV, as well as reductions in HIV funding from multilateral and bilateral donors." The effect of the crisis on exchange rates has also made imported HIV medicines and equipment more expensive, he notes.

HIV and AIDS funding is also coming under criticism from some doctors and medical researchers. They assert that large-scale financing for the fight against AIDS comes at the expense of other vital health needs. HIV-AIDS advocates respond that the campaign against AIDS has generated billions of additional dollars for health care in African and other developing countries and has saved millions of lives with prevention and treatment programmes.

The critics may also have a hard time convincing President Zuma. AIDS, he declared, "is not merely a health challenge. It is a challenge with profound social, cultural and economic consequences. It is an epidemic that affects entire nations. ... We have done much to tackle HIV and AIDS, but it is not enough. Much more needs to be done." ■

Delivering on Africa's development

NEPAD plan tallies some gains, and adjusts its course

Farming in Tanzania: NEPAD is encouraging African governments to devote at least 10 per cent of their budgets to agriculture and rural development

By **Ernest Harsch**

As the first decade of the new millennium drew to a close, it was a time for proponents of Africa's development to take stock. "A lot has been done," affirms Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, the chief executive officer of the Secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the continent's central development plan. But over the eight years since the programme's inception, he acknowledges in an interview with *Africa Renewal*, there also have been "ups and downs," and the challenges ahead remain daunting.

In certain respects, argues Mr. Mayaki, that initial period for NEPAD was something of an "experimental process," as Africa's governments, regional organizations and international partners tested new ways of tackling the continent's deep poverty, weak economies and shaky political systems. Now that Africa's continent-wide political and development institutions have found a clearer direction, he says, the real challenge of NEPAD is to show more tangible results. "Now we really have to deliver very concretely on the ground. It's on the basis of our delivery that we have to be judged."

NEPAD was originally adopted at a 2001 summit meeting of African leaders. The plan expressed the determination of Africans "to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world." Within Africa, NEPAD promotes greater democracy and respect for human rights, closer trade and other economic ties among African countries and the mobilization of more domestic resources to develop the countries' productive sectors and improve people's well-being.

International partnerships

Externally, NEPAD advocates a new relationship between Africa and the international community, one in which non-African partners seek to complement the region's own efforts and priorities. The United Nations, the major industrialized nations of the Group of Eight (G-8) and various donor agencies have pledged to back the African plan. "The international community has supported NEPAD since its inception," notes Mr. Mayaki.

In annual reports to the General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General has systematically outlined the actions taken by both Africa and its partners to support NEPAD. In the most recent, issued in July, Ban Ki-moon reported that total aid to Africa, in cash terms, had increased from $29.5 bn in 2004 to an estimated $42 bn in 2008. But this was still considerably less than the G-8 had promised.

While some 20 African nations had benefited from major debt cancellations by June 2009, the Secretary-General reported, more than half are again running the risk of falling into "debt distress" because they are making less in export earnings as a result of the downturn in global trade. Meanwhile, the restrictive trade policies of major industrialized powers further hinder African exports, which is particularly "to the disadvantage of African farmers and agroproducers," reports Mr. Ban.

Flows of foreign direct investment to Africa have risen significantly, surpassing $60 bn in 2008, according to preliminary estimates. But the world recession and tighter credit conditions in 2009 are hampering that trend.

Governance and citizenship

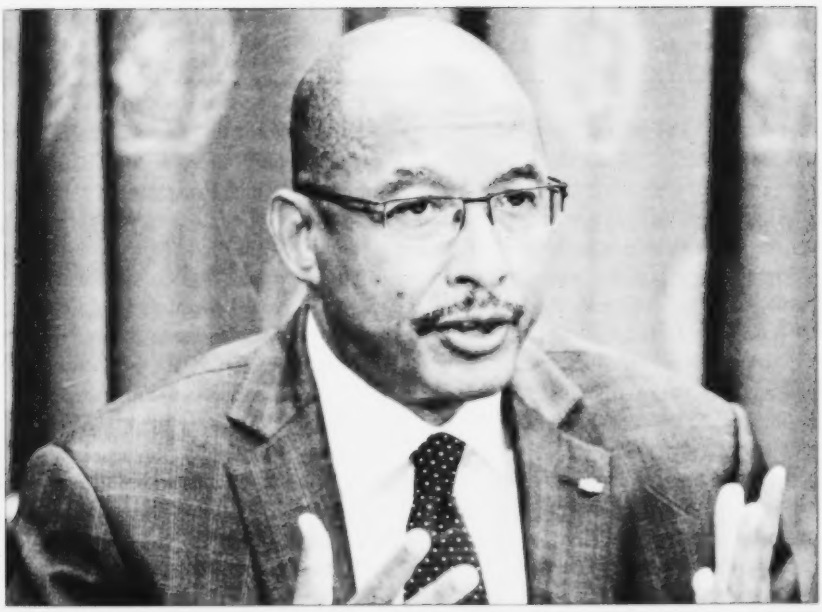
While NEPAD acknowledges Africa's need for assistance from the outside, the plan emphasizes that Africans should look within for lasting solutions. In the political realm, this is reflected in an understanding that development cannot take off without sustained peace and inclusive government systems.

To help foster improvements in democratic norms and sound management, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was launched in 2003 as an outgrowth of NEPAD. Under the mechanism, teams of respected African personalities travel to various African countries to consult with governments, opposition politicians, civil society and others to assess political governance and economic management. Although participation is not mandatory, notes Mr. Mayaki, "You see more and

more countries deciding to volunteer." Thirty African governments so far have signed on to the APRM, and 12 have completed their first reviews.

At the conclusion of the reviews, participating governments generally agree to various recommendations. Ghana, for example, pledged to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the executive, Rwanda to lessen conflicts with neighbouring countries, Kenya to reduce the influence of ethnicity in political competition and South Africa to combat violence against women.

But not all countries have implemented their APRM recommendations, Mr. Mayaki concedes, noting that many governments lack the capacity to follow through. Civil society groups and the private sector also need to be more active in pressing for implementation. "You can have the best public institutions, but if you don't have sound citizenship, then your probability of developing in a democratic way is very limited."



Ibrahim Assane Mayaki: NEPAD is being integrated more closely into the structures of the African Union, to ensure broader political support for the programme across the continent.

From farms to schools

One example of how NEPAD is seeking to encourage the adoption of more effective policies by African governments is the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Formulated in 2003, the CAADP seeks to increase farm production in an environmentally sustainable manner so as to boost food security, provide more raw materials for African industries and raise rural incomes.

The programme reaffirms a commitment by African governments to devote at least 10 per cent of their national budgets to agriculture. "To say the truth," Mr. Mayaki concedes, "that target has not been very well attained."

In an effort to generate wider national support for CAADP, NEPAD's promoters have initiated a series of broad national consultations among governments, farmers, traders and others. In October, Liberia became the eighth African country to sign a formal CAADP "compact" committing the government, farmers' organizations, private sector and aid agencies to the programme's goals, including the 10 per cent budget target.

Raising farm incomes and creating economic opportunities in Africa's countryside will also be important for the continent's long-term political stability, Mr. Mayaki observes. By generating rural employment for discontented youth, governments may be able to stabilize their political institutions. But if they fail to do so, they will be sitting on "a political bomb."

There have been a number of other recent NEPAD initiatives and projects:

- The construction of a $1.4 bn submarine cable, called Ulurunet, to provide broadband Internet access for all coastal and island countries of Africa. The cable is scheduled to become operational before the end of 2010.
- A project to advance the teaching of science, mathematics and technology in several countries of West and North Africa.
- Numerous projects to promote women's empowerment by providing microcredit, vocational skills, enterprise development support and other assistance. Spain has pledged €10 mn over five years, and between August 2008 and April 2009 alone its fund disbursed €6.3 mn in grants to 77 projects in 26 African countries.
- The equipping of 80 primary and secondary schools in 16 countries with computers and other information and communications technology, as part of a pilot NEPAD "e-schools" initiative to provide students with such technical skills and knowledge.

Mobilizing domestic resources

Building up Africa's physical infrastructure — roads, railways, harbours, electricity grids, waterworks, communications networks — is another NEPAD priority. Such infrastructure will be essential if African industries, small businesses and farmers are to produce and earn more.

Building such large-scale projects is especially expensive, however. A recent World Bank study estimated that $80 bn would be needed annually to bridge Africa's "infrastructure gap." Part of that amount is being provided by foreign donors and investors. In 2008, commitments of financing by members of a consortium on infrastructure in Africa reached $13.7 bn, up from $12.4 bn the year before.

But the world economic downturn will make it harder to secure enough donor aid or private foreign investments. "Given that infrastructure projects need quite impor-

tant amounts of resources," notes Mr. Mayaki, "we'll evidently face challenges in that sector."

Such external difficulties make it even more imperative for Africa to find ways to better use its own pools of domestic financing. The potential is there, Mr. Mayaki points out. Currently, Africa spends some $40 bn annually on food imports. With sound agricultural policies and the investment of just a portion of that amount in boosting farm yields, Africa could grow much more food, drastically reduce its import bill and even earn money from food exports. In addition, about $30 bn a year is now also lost to capital flight, with about $20 bn of that amount resulting from corruption, Mr. Mayaki reports. By stemming corruption and keeping such vast sums from reaching foreign bank accounts, African countries could make more available at home for investment in infrastructure and other priority needs.

Broader African ownership

When NEPAD was first launched in 2001, Africa's previous continental political body, the Organization of African Unity, was still in the process of transforming itself into the current African Union. Establishing the AU's new political and security institutions took some time and attention. In that context, several African presidents took a personal lead in promoting NEPAD within Africa and abroad, and a NEPAD Secretariat was established in Pretoria, South Africa, separate from the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In 2007 a summit of African leaders decided to better integrate NEPAD into the AU. They envisioned replacing the NEPAD Secretariat with a new NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, a process that is expected to be completed in 2010. The new agency will still be located in South Africa, but now as an integral part of the AU. Mr. Mayaki, in fact, already serves not only as NEPAD's CEO, but also as the representative in South Africa of the chairperson of the AU Commission.

Africa Renewal asked Mr. Mayaki whether the closer integration of NEPAD into the AU reflects an effort to generate broader political responsibility for the plan within Africa, especially now that several of its early proponents — such as President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa — are no longer in office.

The initial push given by those leaders "was absolutely essential" at the time, Mr. Mayaki responds. "Otherwise NEPAD would not have been seen as important." Nevertheless, he continues, "Now we are in a phase of opening up to broader ownership, so NEPAD becomes owned by the 53 countries of the African Union."

That effort in turn poses new challenges for NEPAD. "We have to be present more widely," Mr. Mayaki explains, "and we have to deliver very concretely in all the regions." ■

Protecting women

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their police forces to investigate such crimes, and Liberia has set up a special court (the Circuit Court E) to hear cases of sexual violence. Guinea-Bissau has introduced gender training programmes for magistrates.

Since 2007 new legal aid clinics have been operating in the Congolese province of North Kivu to help women and their families seek justice. "Each month, we record about 30 cases of rape," reports Eugene Buzake, a lawyer with the non-governmental Synergie pour l'assistance juridique (SAJ), "and we direct the victims to the courts." The group provides free legal advice, arranges protection for witnesses and helps transport them to court appearances. Some military prosecutors are now seeking the SAJ's involvement, to help improve the prospects of winning convictions.

Social engagement

As this example illustrates, greater involvement by civil society groups, women's organizations and other social actors can be vital in countering violence against women. Civil society groups can put pressure on security forces to correct shortcomings and take more energetic action. In South Africa in the late 1990s, women's organizations were invited to participate in a public review of the country's defence structures and policies. In the process they helped expose problems ranging from the environmental impact of military activities to sexual harassment of women by army personnel.

More broadly, violence against women is a societal problem and cannot be curbed by security institutions alone, notes Anne Marie Goetz, a governance and security adviser with the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Much of the violence, she told the OSAA seminar, takes place in the family and other "private spaces," and is therefore difficult to police. Moreover, she added, the "wide tolerance of abuses" prevalent in many societies in turn makes it harder to transform the security institutions.

Another hurdle is women's generally subordinate position in society. In Sierra Leone, according to a study by WIPSEN–Africa, some women who sought to join the police or army — and who met all the selection qualifications — were ultimately "ordered" by their husbands not to take up the positions open to them.

Getting Africa's security institutions to better protect women and advancing women's overall social and political status thus go hand-in-hand, Kristin Valasek of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces told the OSAA seminar. Both require the integration of women into the highest levels of national decision-making and the mobilization of women's associations and civil society groups locally.

Action at the grassroots is especially vital, argues Joséphine Pumbulu, who is in charge of women's and children's rights for the Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme in the DRC. Her group promotes women's rights in schools, churches, marketplaces and other public venues across the country, and also presses the government, army and police to safeguard women from violence. She urges Congolese women to more vocally "denounce the rapists" and vows that as long as women's rights are not upheld, "we are not going to cross our arms." ■

A F R I C A

AGENDA

25 January 2010, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — Thirteenth Africa Partnership Forum. Tel: +33 1 45 24 87 75; fax: +33 1 44 30 61 33; e-mail: apf.contact@oecd.org; website: www.oecd.org

25 January–2 February 2010, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — Summit of the African Union. On the theme "Information and Communication Technologies in Africa". Website: www.africa-union.org

27–31 January 2010, Davos (Switzerland) — World Economic Forum. Annual gathering of world business and political figures, on the theme "Improve the State of the World: Rethink, Redesign and Rebuild." Website: www.weforum.org

1–4 February 2010, Cape Town (South Africa) — Mining Indaba. An annual conference for natural resource professionals to network and learn about mining and market prospects around the world. Website: www.miningindaba.com

4–5 February 2010, Ottawa (Canada) — Africa's New Frontier: Innovation, Technology, Prosperity. Sponsored by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. E-mail: AfricaNewFrontier@idrc.ca; website: www.idrc.ca/AfricaNewFrontier

8–10 February 2010, Accra (Ghana) — Africa Investment Forum. Organized by the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) and the government of Ghana, on the theme "Accelerating Intra-African Trade and Investment." Tel: +44 207 024 8200; fax: +44 207 024 8201; e-mail: info@cbcglobal.org; website: www.cbcglobal.org

24–26 February 2010, Sandton (South Africa) — Energy Indaba 2010. The flagship annual African energy event will focus on solutions for a new energy future for Africa. Contact: Liz Hart, e-mail: info@siyenza.za.com; website: www.energyafricaexpo.com

6–10 March 2010, Alexandria (Egypt) — International Conference on Coastal Zone Management of River Deltas and Low Land Coastlines. Organized by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt and the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport, among others. Contact: Ibrahim El Shinnawy, tel: +203 484 4614; fax: +203 484 4615; e-mail: CZMRDLLC@nwrc-egypt.org; website: www.nwrc-egypt.info

9–10 March 2010, Cape Town (South Africa) — Africa Trade and Export Finance Conference. The fourth annual conference of the most senior decision-makers within the sub-Saharan trade and export sector. E-mail: info@exportagroup.com; website: www.exportagroup.com/events/conferences

12–16 April 2010, Nairobi (Kenya) — African Ministerial Meeting on Weather, Climate and Water. For the first time, African ministers responsible for meteorology will meet to address ways of strengthening weather, climate and water information to help guide decision-makers. Hosted by the government of Kenya and organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in partnership with the African Union. Website: www.wmo.int/pages/publications/meteoworld/nairobi_en.html

19–20 April 2010, Abuja (Nigeria) — Nigeria International Investors Forum. Will focus on how the private sector can partner with government in support of the national objective of becoming a top 20 global economy and in the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals. Tel: +44 207 024 8200; fax: +44 207 024 8201; e-mail: info@cbcglobal.org; website: www.cbcglobal.org

27–29 April 2010, Washington, DC (USA) — US–Africa Infrastructure Conference. Organized by the Corporate Council on Africa. E-mail: vsequeira@africacncl.org; website: www.africacncl.org

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

1–2 December 2009, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) — First African Decent Work Symposium. Organized by the government in collaboration with the International Labour Office (ILO) and the African Union Commission. Tel: +251-11-544-4480; +251-11-544-4481; fax: +251-11-544-5573; +251-11-551-3633; e-mail: addisababa@ilo.org; website: www.ilo.org

A F R I C A

BOOKS

The Economics and Politics of Climate Change, eds. Cameron Hepburn and Dieter Helm (Oxford University Press, Northamptonshire, U.K., 2009; 525 pp; hb £30)

To Cook a Continent: Destructive Extraction and the Climate Crisis in Africa by Nnimmo Bassey (Pambazuka Press Publication, Oxford, U.K., 2010; 224 pp; pb £12.95)

Climate Change in Africa by Camilla Toulmin (Zed Books, London, U.K., 2009; 160 pp; pb $23.95)

Where is Uhuru? Reflections on the Struggle for Democracy in Africa by Issa G. Shivji (Pambazuka Press Publication, Oxford, U.K., 2009; 260 pp; pb £16.95)

Struggles for Citizenship in Africa by Bronwen Manby (Zed Books, London, U.K., 2009; 208 pp; hb £40.00, pb £12.99)

Enquêter auprès des migrants: Le chercheur et son terrain, ed. Atmane Aggoun (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2009; 164 pp; €15.50, FF102)

The Poverty of Ideas: Democracy, Development and the Decline of the Intellect in South Africa, eds. Leslie Dikent and William Gumede (Jacana Media, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2009; 256 pp; pb R180)

India in Africa: Ties that Bind or Binds that Tie? eds. Emma Mawdsley and Gerard McCann (Pambazuka Press Publication, Oxford, U.K., 2010; 208 pp; pb £16.95)

Droit Congolais, africain et international du travail by Aubin N'Semy Mabanza (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2009; 244 pp; €24, FF157)

Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008, eds. Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (Jacana Media, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2009; 296 pp; pb R230)

A New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment and Development, eds. Roger Southall and Henning Melber (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Cape Town, South Africa, 2009; 554 pp; pb R245)

Corruption, fraude, évasion fiscale et croissance by Antoine N'Gakosso (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2009; 182 pp; pb €18.50, FF121)

Acquisition and Transfer of Property in Islamic Law by Yahaya Yunusa Bambale (Malthouse Press, Lagos, Nigeria, 2008; 124 pp; pb £20.95)

SMS Uprising: Mobile Phone Activism in Africa, ed. Sokari Ekine (Pambazuka Press Publication, Oxford, U.K., 2010; 200 pp; pb £12.95)

The Democratic Moment: South Africa's Prospects under Jacob Zuma by Xolela Mangcu (Jacana Media, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2009; 256 pp; pb R180)

L'Afrique est mon combat by Bruno Amoisson (L'Archipel, Paris, France, 2009; 216 pp; pb €17.95)

China into Africa: Trade, Aid and Influence, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC, USA, 2008; 339 pp; pb $29.95)

Power, Politics and Identity in South African Media: Selected Seminar Papers, eds. Adrian Hadland et al. (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa, 2008; 402 pp; pb £17.99)

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer (HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY, USA, 2009; 288 pp; hb $25.99)

Potholes and Profits: Business and Other Conversations and Experiences from Africa by Paul Runge (Africa Project Access Publications, Houghton, South Africa, 2008; £13, €16, $20, R195)

Le difficile chemin des droits de l'homme au Maroc: du déni à la reconnaissance by Mohamed Saadi (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2009; 180 pp; €17, FF112)

Trade and the Environment: Fundamental Issues in International Law, WTO Law and Legal Theory by Erich Vranes (Oxford University Press, Oxford, U.K., 2009; 480 pp; hb £60)

African Economic Institutions by Kwame Akonor (Routledge, Kentucky, USA, 2009; 160 pp; hb $110)

AFRICA WATCH

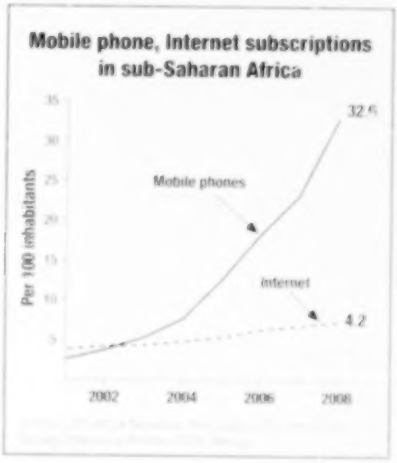
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

Mobile phone explosion in Africa

In December the UN's International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reported that mobile phone subscriptions in sub-Saharan Africa grew at more than twice the global average over the past eight years — from 11 mn in 2000 to a remarkable 246 mn at the end of 2008, the most recent year for which data is available. As a result, the ITU noted, 32.6 per cent of all inhabitants in the region — nearly one in every three — now has wireless telephone access, with service available in a far greater number of countries than in previous years.

Although the continent still lags behind the rest of the world in the number of subscriptions per person, the ITU report said, the steady growth in the use of mobile phones had "defied all predictions." Falling costs and increased investment in infrastructure and innovative banking, education and health applications, it predicted, would fuel continued strong growth in the industry.

Internet access also grew strongly, from 3 mn subscriptions in 2000 to 32 mn in 2008, the ITU found, although most users still connect through slow and unreliable telephone lines. The high cost and scarcity of fibre-optic connections limits access to faster and more capable Internet broadband cable services. Wireless broadband, however, introduced in Africa in 2004, is expanding rapidly, with 7 million subscribers in 12 countries by the end of 2008.



With its comparatively low cost and strong mobile subscriber base, the ITU observed, "mobile broadband has the potential of becoming Africa's main broadband Internet access method in the future." ■

APPOINTMENTS

The UN Secretary-General has appointed Mr. **Ibrahim Gambari** of Nigeria as the new joint special representative of the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Mr. Gambari has held numerous UN positions, serving most recently as the Secretary-General's special advisor on the International Compact with Iraq and other political issues, including on Myanmar. In 2005 he was under-secretary-general for political affairs and prior to that under-secretary-general and special adviser on Africa. A former external affairs minister of Nigeria, he also served as Nigeria's permanent representative to the UN.

Ms. **Wangari Maathai**, a Kenyan environmental activist, has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General as a UN messenger of peace, with a special focus on the environment and climate change. Ms. Maathai, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, founded the grassroots Green Belt Movement in 1977. She was elected to the Kenyan parliament in 2002, and in 2005 served as her country's assistant minister for environment, natural resources and wildlife.

The Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has appointed Mr. **Yukiya Amano** of Japan as the agency's new director general, with the approval of the IAEA's General Conference. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Amano served as ambassador of Japan to International Organizations in Vienna, and as an IAEA governor. He also held a variety of senior positions in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, relating to scientific and arms control issues.

Mr. **Hany Abdel-Aziz** of Egypt has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General as his special representative for Western Sahara and head of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Previously, Mr. Abdel-Aziz was a director in the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). He has served the UN for some 25 years, including in eight peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

SOUTH-SOUTH

Developing country ties grow

Economic growth and the emergence of environmental, financial and security challenges requiring collective action are fuelling an unprecedented surge in cooperation between developing countries, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro said at a UN High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation held 1–3 December in Nairobi, Kenya.

Speaking at the opening, the former Tanzanian foreign minister told delegates that millions of people have already been lifted out of poverty. She also noted that "new Southern poles of growth now exist in trade, finance and technology, signalling the emergence of a new community of countries with formidable economic strength and tremendous potential to advance their well-being further."

Development works best when countries expand regional trade and investment, she noted. "Vibrant regional neighbourhoods pay handsome dividends, including jobs, increased productivity and better living standards."

Trade among developing countries has grown by an average 13.4 per cent annually for more than a decade, topping $2,400 bn in 2007, about 20 per cent of the world total. ■